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CHARLES ALGERNON SIDNEY VIVIAN,

The founder of the "Jolly Corks" which organization afterward became the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, with Vivian at its head. Taken in San Francisco at the age of twenty-nine.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE LIFE OF

Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian

FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF ELKS

TOGETHER WITH ANECDOTES
AND REMINISCENCES OF HIS
WORK AND TRAVELS . . . .

BY

IMOGEN HOLBROOK VIVIAN

SAN FRANCISCO
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TO

THE ELKS

Whose glorious mission is to cheer
and uplift, this little volume
is respectfully dedicated.

Preface

It having been suggested to me by friends quite frequently that a little volume containing a biographical sketch of Charles Vivian, the founder of the great Order of Elks, including many incidents and reminiscences of travel, written by his widow and constant companion during the last several years of his life, would be acceptable and interesting to many, I have decided to make this humble effort with the object of perpetuating the memory of one whose faults have long since faded into the dim vista of forgetfulness; whose many virtues stand out in bold relief. Hoping, not without many misgivings, that this little book will meet with some recognition and approval by members of the Order and be of use to some extent in giving them a clearer insight into the true character and inner life of the originator.

A great majority, I am sure, know very little of the man who in 1867 first conceived the idea of organizing a society to promote, protect and enhance the welfare and happiness of each other.

What nobler, loftier sentiment than that contained in these few words from the original constitution, the very essence embodied in the life and teachings of that divine nobility whose mortal passing illumined this earth with the glorious light of love nearly two thousand years ago, and whose benign and blessed influence has steadily increased with each succeeding century. Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, Fidelity—what a grand and solid foundation to build upon. A rock impervious alike to the world's fiercest storms and all the ever-shifting sands of time, and how well has it fulfilled its destiny up to the present day. What glorious possibilities for the future! "*Vestigia nulla retrosum*," but excelsior is the watchword blazoned in letters of living truth upon the banners of this great and noble Order.

With these few words of preface I launch this frail bark, trusting it will not be stranded upon the shore of a too stern and unfriendly criticism, but serve the purpose, in a way, of fulfilling the sincere desire of the writer.

Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian

In Memoriam

Who makes two blades of grass to grow,
Two blades of grass where grew but one,
Is greater than Napoleon,
Or he who wrought his overthrow,
And chained his chafing soul in thrall,
But he who plucks up wrinkled care,
And plants a smile of pleasure there,
Plants two red roses in the sun,
Where dim and doubtful grew but one,
Is greater, nobler far than all.

I count this sunny, loving boy,
This laughing Vivian who drew
All hearts to his, because he knew
The curse of care, the pay of joy,
The patron saint of chastened pride,
To babe or mother, young or old,
His hands were as hands full of gold,
A smile for all, a tear for all,
He never caused one tear to fall,
Save when he bowed his head and died.

Joaquin Miller

Chapter I.

Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian, the founder, was born in Exeter, Devonshire County, England, in 1846. His father was a clergyman of the Established Church, and his early years were passed in comparative quiet and comfort. After his father's death and during his school days his predilection and natural talent for the stage became apparent, and he finally drifted into the dramatic profession, being most apt in comedy. His advancement was phenomenal and while a mere boy he had gained a position, as a well-known critic said, in speaking of him, "the like of which many an old head has grown gray in the effort to reach."

In 1867, hardly out of his teens, he first came to this country, making a decided impression wherever he appeared, and it was during that first visit to the United States that he founded what is now called "The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks." He soon returned to England, but his stay there was brief. Upon his return to America he appeared with great

success in the principal cities and finally landed in San Francisco under the management of Sheridan Corbyn and was later under contract to the late veteran California manager, Thomas McGuire, at whose opera house he created a genuine sensation. I well remember in the gentlemen's furnishing stores in San Francisco were the Vivian hats, Vivian collars, Vivian ties and other articles of apparel, showing how decidedly the rage he became with the people of the west coast.

He organized a company and played with great success throughout the Pacific Coast. I had been under the tuition of Professor James E. Murdoch in Cincinnati, and in the summer at his country home, Murdoch, Warren County, Ohio. I had just returned to San Francisco and was about to give my first dramatic recital in conjunction with Professor Ebenezer Knowlton at Brayton Hall, Oakland, Cal., when Manager McGuire introduced me to Mr. Vivian, saying, could I get him for a song and sketch upon my program his name would be a great attraction. To this, Mr. Vivian readily consented, but at the time had forgotten that he had a previous engagement to sing at the Queen's birthday celebration at the Lick House, so when

the evening arrived he sent a substitute (who, by the way, was entertaining) and a letter of regret that a previous engagement which he had overlooked should prevent him from assisting in my entertainment, together with the request that he be allowed the pleasure of calling upon me. Suffice it to say that he did call, and several times, before again leaving the city. Some time after that he came down from Eureka, Humboldt Bay, to engage me for a company which he had taken there to open the new opera house. I refused at first positively, as I had other prospects in view. He came again urging me to accept, but I was still determined for business reasons to adhere to my first resolve. The third time he called he said that he had made up his mind that he would persevere until I accepted. He seemed so persistent that I weakened in my determination and he won the day.

Chapter II.

We made the trip by boat to Eureka. It was while *en route* that he told me of his love from the first, that his heart had been ever free until the day of our first meeting—since then entirely mine—although he explained to me fully concerning the marriage in England, which occurred while he was yet in his teens. He stated that this marriage was a foolish step, entirely arranged by third parties and that the divorce proceedings were then in progress in the English courts and urging me to give him my promise that our marriage should take place immediately after the divorce was granted. I promised to think the matter over and after some days we became engaged. I was some seven or eight weeks with his company when I decided to give dramatic recitals in Southern California and join him later in San Francisco. He came to me at once upon his arrival to inform me that he was a free man and bringing with him newspaper clippings giving full accounts of the divorce

which had just been granted in the English courts and urging me to fulfill my promise.

The following week, on July 9, 1876, we were married at the home of my sister in Oakland, Cal., by the Rev. Dr. Eells, starting for the East at once, our first stop being Eureka, Nevada, where we played to a packed house at mining town prices. From there we went directly to Salt Lake City, remaining some little time among the Mormons, Mr. Vivian organizing a lodge there. We then visited Ogden, giving our parlor entertainments at the Opera House and playing at many small towns in Utah. We were then intending to come directly East, but at the hotel in the little town of Corrinne we met Mr. and Mrs. John McCormack of Helena, Montana. They were so enthusiastic over our entertainments, which they had attended at the town hall in Corrinne, that they prevailed upon us to take the seven days' stage trip to Helena in the dead of winter, assuring us that we would be amply rewarded for the hardship endured by reaping a golden harvest of dollars. Acting upon their advice, who knew full well the necessities of the undertaking, Mr. Vivian ordered some coats made especially for the trip from Buffalo skins reaching to our feet, and with fur caps, leggings

and mittens; also two fine robes belonging to Mr. McCormack, that he insisted we should need, we felt quite ably prepared to defend ourselves against the keen and biting sallies of old Jack Frost when seen at his best, doing his heaviest strokes in a Montana midwinter.

So we mounted the old-fashioned stage-coach at a small town some distance from Corinne armed *cap-a-pie* to do battle with the elements upon one of the coldest days that it has ever been my fortune to experience. The coach, I remember, was rather shy of room, and by the time we were fairly situated with our numerous wraps, to our embarrassment several other passengers gathered about with anxious, puzzled faces that seemed to say, "Where do I get in?" At which Mr. Vivian jokingly remarked that as we were only one we had no right to take the place of six; whereupon we minimized ourselves, so to speak, as much as possible, giving our fellow passengers a chance, and started upon our journey. About eight o'clock in the evening of an uneventful day, we arrived at the station for supper and lodging. It was not dignified by the name of hotel and the service and *cuisine* were not of the kind to tempt the appetite of an epicure. We partook but daintily of the menu

at the first several stations, merely sufficient to fortify ourselves against a weakness preceding starvation, which we perceptibly felt creeping over us until about the fourth day, when at one halting and relay place we sat down to a really well-cooked and palatable dinner, notwithstanding the fact that it was served *sans ceremonie*. One dish that I particularly remember, being a novelty, was what the waiter who gave us the verbal bill of fare designated as sage-hen. We relished it to a considerable extent, partially perhaps, owing to the stinting process which we had practiced thus far upon the trip, therefore we were easily susceptible to even a slight improvement in the line of dietetics. At all of those stations where we spent the nights *en route* to Montana we were called for breakfast at three in the morning and were well upon the road at four, in order to cover as much ground as possible by daylight. Our fellow passengers were not always in the best of humor at being aroused from their slumbers at that untimely hour, but Mr. Vivian's unflagging *bonhomie* soon transformed them from the grumbling, much-abused pessimists of a few moments previous to a very merry party and kept them well up to the high water mark of good humor with his sallies of

wit, anecdotes, songs, etc., until kind Mother Nature warned us it was rest-time, by slowly drawing down her sable shades.

Thus passed each day until we reached Virginia City, Montana, our first stopping place, which was rather a lively mining town, in which we played two evenings to large audiences. Then we left for Helena, where we were splendidly received, playing a week to standing room only. If I remember correctly, there was then no admission to the theatre under $1.50, while $2.00 and $2.50 was the price for reserved seats. Mr. Vivian was the great attraction at the clubs during our stay in Helena, as at all other points, and if I am not mistaken, organized a lodge there. Many officers from Fort Shaw came over to attend our entertainments, being very enthusiastic and urging us to visit the Fort. By their invitation and advice, together with letters from Gen. A. J. Smith of Helena to the Commanding Officer, we started for the Post, a long stage ride from Helena. Upon the night of our arrival, through the courtesy of Lieut. Jacobs, we were consigned to his quarters and given *carte blanche* to all his belongings. It was about ten o'clock in the evening when Mr. Vivian betook himself to the Officers' Clubroom for a remedy which he

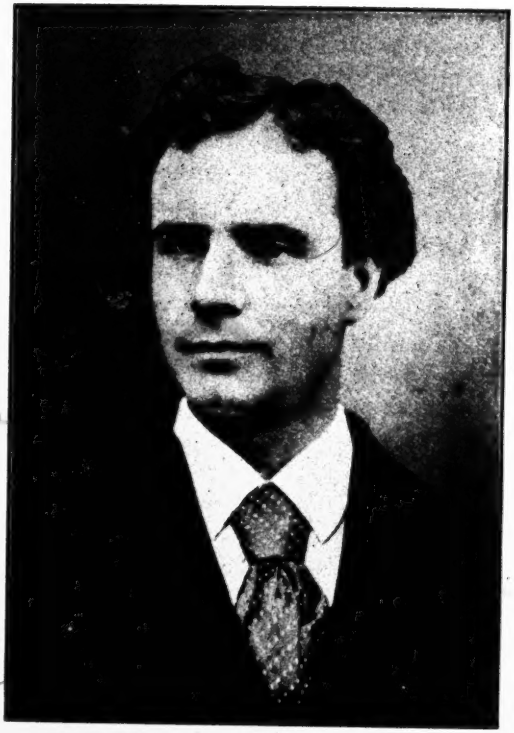
felt sure would break up a severe cold which I had contracted upon the trip, and called "rum and gum." As it seemed of remarkable strength, I protested against drinking it all, but he insisted that I must finish it to have the desired effect, (a little stroke of policy on his part as I afterwards had reason to believe) with the understanding that he should read me to sleep and then he was to retire also. I soon yielded to the soothing influence of old Morpheus and sank into that quiet sleep "that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care;" when after having remained oblivious for several hours, I awoke startled by hearing loud bursts of laughter, together with the name of Vivian, which proceeded from the Officers' Clubroom, located very near our apartments. I called to Mr. Vivian, but found he was not in the room; next glanced at my watch which registered the hour of five in the morning, while he was still furnishing the merriment in the Officers' Clubroom. He often related to his friends this little joke that he had practiced upon me with the assistance of the "cold remedy." That morning the wives of the officers were furious that their husbands should have remained all night at the Club, and the Commanding Officer especially had never before been

known to do such an undignified thing. Each one gave as an excuse that he had been sitting up with Vivian. So all the wives vowed special vengeance upon Vivian, but when they called to welcome us to the Post next day and were introduced to him, their anger soon vanished under the magnetic spell of his influence. We were given an ovation at Fort Shaw, being royally entertained by the officers and their wives. We remained three weeks, giving several entertainments to large audiences composed of the *elite* of the Post and private soldiers, the same audience facing us each evening. The theatre, which was large and comfortable, was constructed by the soldiers and quite in the rough, with little regard for the artistic details of adornment, owing, perhaps, to the fact that a love for the beautiful and artistic in environment, however strong, must necessarily be sacrificed upon the migratory conditions of a soldier's life. I recall with pleasure the delightful days spent there.

Chapter III.

Our next stop was Fort Benton, where we played one night and were finely entertained by the Commanding Officer. We then played a return engagement at Helena; after that playing Butte, Bozeman, Missoula and Deer Lodge. It would not, perhaps, be *mal a propos* to insert a few words from a clipping which I happen to have by me from a Deer Lodge paper, which reflects but the sentiment entertained by press and public wherever we appeared during those travels.

"The Vivian Entertainment.—Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vivian, *nee* Miss Imogen Holbrook, arrived on Tuesday, and on Wednesday evening gave their first entertainment at O'Neill's Hall, which they repeated on Thursday evening with change of programme and large audiences both evenings. Although announced as a parlor entertainment, and presumably of like character to those of Plummer and Maguire, it is yet very different from and superior to the entertainments they gave. The humor is not so coarse, the



CHARLES ALGERNON SIDNEY VIVIAN,

Taken at the age of twenty-five.

characterization not so grotesque, there is not so much reliance on "make up" and noise, and a larger element of song is introduced. Mr. Vivian does not essay the rendition of time-worn recitative pieces, but tends more to the humorous in characterizations, song and travesty, while Mrs. Vivian varies the performance with the finer elocutionary readings. In all respects it is more of the character of a parlor entertainment than any that have preceded it, and even the step songs, "Simple Simon" and "Ten Thousand Miles Away" are given in a genteelly humorous manner. Mrs. Vivian's recitations of "All Quiet Along the Potomac To-night," Lewis' "Maniac Wife" and Bret Harte's "Idyl of Battle Hollow," were very good and very well received. The lady is a fine reader and acquitted herself admirably in the most difficult task in the profession—heavy recitations by a lady on a small stage, close to an audience and without the accessories of scenery and stage effects. Vivian is immense. His character sketches are all good, and his after-dinner speech at the Agricultural Association is the neatest and most artistic oratorical extravaganza we have seen on the stage. As a stage vocalist he has had no peer, nor even rival in Montana. "Jer-

sey Sam" is alone an evening's entertainment of excellent flavor, while it is but a gem in a cluster of brilliant character songs and olios, in which he sings everything from a solo to a whole oratorio, and initiates the audience in the methods and transformations of the lightning changes of Protean Artists. His wonderful facial control, cultivated voice, thorough stage experience, pleasing address and versatility combine to render his entertainments the most acceptable of their character that have been presented to our people, and they are deserving of the best commendations given them by the press. Our readers in neighboring communities Mr. and Mrs. Vivian will visit should not fail to see them, and they will always command good houses and hearty appreciation in Deer Lodge."

We next played at Fort Ellis, then Fort Buford. I review with fondest recollections those charming summer days at Buford as the guests of Colonel Orlando Moore, who took command at that Post after General Hazen received his appointment to Vienna. Some years after Mr. Vivian's death he called upon me and brought a necktie and scarf pin of Mr. Vivian's, which we had overlooked in packing our belongings, and which he had kept all that time, as he

said, with the anticipation of coming East and personally placing them in my hands. What memories they awakened of happy days that vanished all too quickly! I can never forget that beautiful morning in July when we quietly sailed down the Missouri and our boat cast anchor at Buford. The only drawback to an otherwise enjoyable trip down the river was the vigorous attack from the most persistent, fearless and sizable mosquitoes I ever laid eyes upon. The Jerseys are not to be mentioned with them, certainly not as peers; and when I state that we arose at three A. M., passing the remainder of the night upon deck, one can readily imagine what our sufferings were; but as *a propos* to our case, "there is no great loss without some small gain," as a wise philosopher insisted, and our gain in this particular instance was in beholding a most glorious summer sunrise, when Apollo came forth in all his glory, sipping from the dews of each leaf and flower his morning beverage, as if to fortify himself for his triumphal march across the heavens. It was a novel experience, such early hours, (with the exception of our previous stage trip to Helena) as our business, also Mr. Vivian's fondness for club life, made our time for retiring of a necessity generally in the "wee

sma" hours, leaving only the few hours reaching quite far into the morning for that most effective of all restoratives "sore nature's bath"—sleep. As we landed at Buford, a picturesque sight greeted our eyes, a tribe of really magnificent looking mounted Indians came galloping over the hills, the brilliant coloring of their paraphernalia of feathers and beadwork standing out in beautiful contrast against the dull background of the landscape. The Captain took great delight in presenting us to the Chief, with whom he seemed to be upon quite intimate terms, expounding upon his good qualities, at which his Royal Highness, the big Indian, seemed deeply touched. What a magnificent production of the *homo geni* he was; a modern Hercules, and he was well aware of his physical attractions, turning himself about that we might the better study his strong points with a self-conscious air that seemed to say: "Am I not an object of admiration?" Mr. Vivian acknowledged his perfections with a nod and smile, which was apparently very gratifying. He mounted his steed and was off in a flash, following his tribe over the hill and away to the reservation, which was but a short distance from Buford.

Chapter IV.

Mr. Vivian had letters of introduction to Colonel Moore and other officers, but it being only 6:30 in the morning, too early to present them, we were driven to the only place at the Post for the accommodation of strangers, a peculiar, unfinished building with rough beams and rafters plainly visible. The landlord, who seemed to be the man of all work about the place, took our order for breakfast, and for the first time in our lives we partook of buffalo steak. An amusing incident occurred about this time. Just preceding our breakfast, Mr. Vivian still suffering from the effects of the wholesale raid of the mosquitoes, thought he would take a short walk and see if he could gain entree to the Officers' Clubroom for the purpose of obtaining a morning appetizer. Although early he found the loyal boy knight of old Bacchus at his shrine waiting for his morning devotees. He returned to breakfast feeling improved in spirits and with an appetite that could do justice even to buffalo meat. Later in the day he presented his letters

to Colonel Moore, who received us with a whole-hearted cordiality which I shall never forget, and insisted that we should take possession of his quarters at once as he was alone in the house with servants and plenty of room. We accepted, remaining several days, giving entertainments at the hall there as usual and having a very delightful time.

But to return to my amusing incident. When the officers appeared at their clubroom that morning of our arrival, the somewhat inquisitive mixer of the potations facetiously inquired if chaplains drank; "for" he continued, "we've got the jolliest chaplain in the service. He's awfully jolly; was in here and drank a good-sized cocktail before breakfast." At this the officers exclaimed with one voice: "He's the chaplain for us." For it was considered in those days and at those far-away posts quite the proper thing to indulge, in a moderate way at least, in alcoholic beverages of one kind or another. We were called from that time on "the Chaplain and his wife." We were afterwards informed that they had been expecting a new chaplain at the Post for several days, and as we were fresh arrivals, the boy evidently argued that we were the expected guests. Colonel Moore

drove us out to the Indian reservation before leaving, and we renewed our acquaintance with the big Chief. Mr. Vivian and he became great friends, and at parting he presented Mr. Vivian with a handsome Indian pipe, and insisted that I should accept a very beautiful piece of bead work as a souvenir of our visit. With sincere expressions of regret at our departure from the many friends who escorted us to the boat and wishing us *bon voyage* and a hearty *Dieu vous garde*, we proceeded upon our journey down the river.

We played in Bismarck, Fargo and several other places before embarking upon a Red River boat for Manitoba. As we were sitting upon the deck chatting and admiring the beauties of nature, as viewed along the coast of the Red River, our attention was called to an elk who seemed to be half swimming, half walking near the shore, his head and antlers well above the water's edge. A shot was fired at him from the boat, at which we protested, supported by our fellow passengers. Having frequently spoken of my aversion to the name (Jolly Corks) given to the lodges which Mr. Vivian was organizing at different points during our travels, it suddenly flashed upon my mind, inspired by the sight of

the splendid head and antlers of the animal, that it would make a beautiful badge for Mr. Vivian's Order. I distinctly remember suggesting it to him at the time. When told in recent years that the name "Elk" was chosen a long time previous to that, I was greatly surprised, for I have no recollection of its having been explained to me by Mr. Vivian. During our first visit to Chicago, in 1878, I distinctly remember the very important meeting, as Mr. Vivian called it, and great night, when he changed the name of the Chicago Lodge, to Elk, to please me, he said, knowing my antipathy to the name of "Jolly Corks." I had always believed that I was responsible for the name "Elks," by reason of the foregoing incident. I remember Mr. Vivian having told me, that he was the recipient of a beautiful badge from the Order, when he first founded it in New York, but I never saw it, and was under the impression that they were then called "Jolly Corks." I have since been told that it was an "Elk" badge. He often used to repeat to me parts of the ritual which he had written for the Order, to convince me of its lofty purpose, and told me it was patterned somewhat after an Order of which he had been a member in England. I relate this little incident

CHARLES ALGERNON SIDNEY VIVIAN,

Taken in San Francisco at the age of twenty-seven.

just as it occurred. It may or may not have any bearing or significance in the summing up, so to speak, of the earlier and unfortunately somewhat obscure history of the "Order of Elks."

Returning to our journey up the Red River, we arrived in Winnepeg in due season, where we played a week at the Opera House to large and enthusiastic audiences, and met many charming people. Among them Lord and Lady Dufferin and suite, who were making a farewell tour of the Canadas. The Mayor of Winnepeg urged us to prolong our stay sufficiently to give an entertainment upon the official program, arranged by the city for the *divertissement* of the royal visitors. We consented to do so, playing to a large and demonstrative house, his Lordship and Lady Dufferin being decidedly appreciative. At the conclusion of the performance they remained, requesting the Mayor that we be presented to them, when they expressed themselves as being delighted with the entertainment provided and urged us to visit Ottawa before their departure for England. Lady Dufferin speaks very pleasantly of our entertainment in her "Book of Reviews," upon her American travels. Page 347. She says, "In the evening we went to

a 'Parlor Entertainment'—songs, speeches, and changes of costume—very well done and amusing."

We were shown during our stay there the greatest attention with *fetes* and drives galore, while Mr. Vivian was the *bel esprit* of clubs and social circles there as elsewhere.

All the festivities were wound up with "God Save the Queen," while the frequent and hearty toasts to her Majesty were ample proof of the never dying loyalty to his sovereign that exists in the soul of an Englishman. One evening, I remember at a dinner given us by Mrs. Cornish, whose husband was a member of Parliment, at the instigation of Mr. Vivian, I ventured somewhat timorously in proposing a toast to the American Eagle. The spirit of the gathering was so decidedly English that it required a bit of courage upon my part. Contrary to endeavoring to stifle my American spirit of patriotism, all hands responded most cordially. Suffice it to say that after that evening the toasting of the American Eagle was quite in evidence. I received at the hotel during our stay there many braces of plover from friends of Mr. Vivian who were enthusiastic huntsmen; also many souvenirs from the handiwork of the Indians. Hon.

Mr. McTeavis of the Hudson Bay Company, who upon our departure accompanied us to the boat to wish us a parting "God speed," gave us something of a surprise when just before leaving, a servant of his came aboard leading by chain a little black cub bear, a parting gift for us, which was not only a black bear, but a "*bete noir*" before we, in sheer desperation at his manœuvres decided to part with him. Well, I remember how the poor little fellow frightened the deck hands that night as he was very ill and Mr. Vivian lost much sleep watching with and endeavoring to alleviate his sufferings.

Chapter V.

Our next stop was Fort Pembina where we gave our performance as usual and were right royally entertained. The little cub had recovered from his illness and was very playful, affording much amusement at the Post. Mr. Vivian had a collar made for him marked Imo's "Jimmy Shaw," after a burlesque on oratorio which he used to do and knew was a great favorite of mine. The little fellow was very cunning and full of fun at first, but as time advanced he became unruly and quite beyond our control, so we were only too happy to present him to a party upon our return to Bismarck, who prided himself upon being the proprietor of quite a menagerie. Thus we parted with the quaint little quadruped comedian, as we called him "Jimmy Shaw."

While in Bismarck I remember Mr. Vivian started a subscription by putting down the first ten dollars for a proposed monument to the brave soldiers, to be erected upon the spot where they nobly sacrificed their lives with the gallant

Custer in that bloody battle with the Red men. I have wondered if the monument ever materialized, never having since been informed concerning it. We soon visited St. Paul and Minneapolis, giving entertainments in both cities, and shortly after left for Chicago. There Mr. Vivian accepted an engagement upon a salary, doing his songs and character sketches at two theatres in an evening: the Academy of Music on the West side, Mr. William Emmett, Manager; and at Hamblins' Theatre upon the East side. I used to accompany him in a carriage from one theatre to the other, remaining until he had finished. The Owl Club, which met in the McVicker Theatre Building, was then in the height of its popularity and Mr. Vivian was, as usual, the bright, particular spirit who attracted a *coterie* of what was then considered in Chicago the *creme de la creme* of the literary and other professions; and there was a small army of these choice *bon vivants* who seemed to find time amid all the rush and whirl of a busy, bustling city, as was this young giant of the middle West even in those days, to come together at night, for a few hours of social intercourse and enjoyment which often developed into a literary and musical entertain-

ment, and very enjoyable times they were. I speak from experience, for sometimes they departed from the proverbial selfishness of the sex where club life is concerned, and condescended to invite the daughters of Eve to partake of the festivities. These condescending periods in the otherwise unmolested free and easy hours spent largely worshipping at the shrine of old Momus, were called "ladies' nights." I remember attending one during that stay in Chicago, and a jolly gathering it was. Every one who could do anything in the way of entertaining was expected to lend a helping hand. Julia Rive King the celebrated pianist, favored us with a number of choice selections; Laura Dainty, who was then very popular in Chicago, gave some delightful recitations, followed by selections by the writer; but after once the call upon Mr. Vivian had been responded to, the company would not be satisfied short of several hours' entertainment, persisting in calling for more and more from his inexhaustible *repertoire* of songs, sketches and anecdotes. Beautiful and brilliant Laura Don, who was then leading lady at McVicker's Theatre and who has since passed over to the great majority, was one of the merry party that evening, and seated next to me, would almost

momentarily voice her enthusiasm by exclaiming, "Oh, Mr. Vivian is the funniest man I ever saw,"—"He is just great," and similar expressions of appreciation. The clock registered three hours past the minimum before we said the final good-night, feeling that the club's name, Owl, was not a misnomer, that night at least.

But all these ever-pleasant memories are not untinged with feelings of sadness at the thought of those who then graced the charmed circle with merry jest and laughter that have since been summoned from this brief "span between the two eternities" into the great unknown, "the undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns," Life's panorama seems ever crowded with the quickly shifting scenes of the light and shade, of joy and woe.

From Chicago we soon turned our course toward the rising sun and stopped in Pittsburg, *en route* to Philadelphia, where Mr. Vivian played an engagement. I had friends in Allegheny at whose homes we were given pleasant receptions. I had previously told them that they could depend upon us to assist them in entertaining the company. At the first gathering Mr. Vivian very graciously responded to the requests by giving sketch after sketch called for,

to the great delight of all present, until I called for a clever and original burlesque which he used to do and called "The Concert Party," and another sketch in which he was inimitable, called "Old Man's After-Dinner Speech;" both of which he did not care to do without wigs. So other things were substituted for that evening. Two or three days after, several of the friends came to call upon us, also to invite us to a social gathering arranged for us at another friend's home in Alleghany, and asking me quietly to allow them to take home the wigs that Mr. Vivian would want to use in "The Concert Party" and "Old Man's After-Dinner Speech," insisting that we should promise to keep the fact *entre nous;* which plan was successfully carried out.

When the eventful evening arrived, we were ushered in a little late to find the house filled with guests and the few ladies who had been let into the secret on the *qui vive* for the time to arrive to call for the famous sketches from Mr. Vivian's *repertoire.* As previously arranged, one of the ladies proposed them, when he offered the same excuse as formerly. I immediately produced the wigs, which caused no end of merriment. Mr. Vivian protested at first at being

CHARLES ALGERNON SIDNEY VIVIAN,

Taken in Philadelphia 1878, at the age of thirty-two.

made a montebank, as he expressed it, but the little stroke of strategy concerning the wigs was soon forgotten and he gave the impersonations, demanding them, as well as many others, to the exceedingly demonstrative delight of the company.

Shortly after this we left for Philadelphia, giving our "Parlor Entertainments" for a week at Concert Hall on Chestnut Street. Mr. Vivian next played a short engagement in New York, while I left him to visit a sister and step-father in Vermont. He followed me in two weeks' time, and we remained two weeks after his arrival, during which he was the bright feature of several social gatherings given in our honor. I recall an amusing incident that occurred one day. A simple-minded, honest old farmer from the rural districts, who supplied my sister's household with some of the necessaries of life, was passing as Mr. Vivian was entertaining my step-father with a humorous anecdote while sitting on the porch. The old man who dispensed the butter and eggs listened, convulsed with laughter, and upon its conclusion, said: "Gol darn. If I could tell a story like that, I'd be a play actor," not knowing that Mr. Vivian was in any way connected with that profession.

Upon bidding Vermont friends farewell we went directly to New York and organized a small company for a tour of New England, but remained out but a short time, disbanding in Boston; soon after returning to New York, the great dramatic mecca and *rendezvous*. Mr. Vivian then soon signed a contract with James Duff for the "Admiral" of the original Chicago production of Pinafore, opening at McVicker's Theatre and playing several weeks to large business. During this engagement, which was our last visit to Chicago, Mr. Vivian was in such constant demand at the clubs that I do not think his average was three hours out of the twenty-four, devoted to the great recuperator—sleep.

I very particularly recall to mind one evening during that stay in Chicago; after having devoted several hours each evening at the close of his professional duties for a number of successive nights to the Elk Club, which he had previously organized there, he decided to escort me directly home from the theatre and remain, saying nothing should call him away again that evening; but just as we were comfortably seated at our supper, which had been previously ordered, a messenger arrived with a hurry call from the Lodge, urging Mr. Vivian's immediate

appearance; to which he replied that he would remain at home that evening. We had just turned our attenion to the reading aloud from a book in which we were mutually interested, when a second messenger was announced with another note from the Lodge with this more forcible than elegant wording: "For Heaven's sake, Vivian, come, come quick, we are all dead. Come and bring us to life again." Mr. Vivian appealed to me to know how he would settle the matter. I said very generously, "Go," and thus ended our pleasant evening at home. I relate this as illustrating his irresistible influence and wonderful powers of entertaining in social and club circles.

Brilliant, witty; possessing elegance of address and that indefinable something, which, for the lack of a more fitting word, we will call magnetism; of marked individuality; in fact, I have never met a person who resembled him in the least. The Chicago *Times* of March 26, 1880, in an obituary, said: "No man in the profession had so wide a circle of admiring and warmly attached friends among the younger men of this city. No man's company was ever sought with more eagerness, or more thoroughly enjoyed. He was a story teller without equal; a wit and

a songster. His fund of anecdote was rich and inexhaustible, as his power of repartee was strong; nothing but his inborn carelessness and his preference for the club circle over his professional duties barred him from fortune. With Vivian's last breath went out a life that should have been illustrious. At once a brilliant humorist, a man of feeling, a scholar and a wit. So might it, had fortune willed it, that his genius had been mated with never so slight a gift of management. It was attributable to a defect within his nature for which he was not responsible."

Chapter VI.

From Chicago the Duff Company went directly to St. Louis, opening at De Bars' Opera House, where Mr. Vivian played with great success the "Admiral" in "Pinafore," and the "Judge" in "Trial by Jury," when the Duff season closed. He was engaged to play in the same characters at the Summer Theatre, called "Urhig's Cave," playing a number of weeks to large business, the audience being composed of the *elite* of the city who were enthusiastic in the extreme. Many officers and families from Jefferson Barracks were constant attendants and frequent visitors at our hotel. After the season at Urhig's Cave was closed, we gave an evening at the Post and at its conclusion were tendered a reception by the Post Surgeon and wife, many people from St. Louis having been invited. It was an enjoyable affair. I visited them a few years since while *en route* to the Pacific Coast, at San Antonio where he was stationed as Medical Director of the South Western Division of the Army Posts, and the

visit was delightfully reminiscent of those pleasant weeks spent with Mr. Vivian in St. Louis in 1879.

From St. Louis we proceeded on our westward course toward Denver, Mr. Vivian in the meantime having signed a contract with a company for "Pinafore" and "Trial by Jury," playing Kansas City, Topeka, Laurence and Leavenworth. After playing in Denver, the company disbanded. At that time Leadville was in the extreme height of the gold excitement. We met friends from the East who had visited the great camp and they encouraged us in the belief that we should do well there. A party of gentlemen who were visiting Denver and about to take the trip, urged Mr. Vivian to accompany them and, as the journey was very tedious, the railroad not having been completed, which necessitated a staging of forty miles, Mr. Vivian thought best to precede me to do a little prospecting (in the theatrical line) and ascertain if things were favorable for an opening before subjecting me to the fatigue of the trip. So he accompanied the party to that wonderful mining camp where Dame Fortune with her magic touch smiled sweetly upon the minority; while the great majority of those eager followers of old

"Mammon," who willingly faced danger, hardship and privation, led on by the ever-cheering, vitalizing voice of hope, were doomed to see their cherished desires and aspirations turned to ashes by old Dame Fortune in satanic mood. What a satirist she is!

In a week after Mr. Vivian's arrival, he had concluded arrangements and sent for me. The old amphitheatre was renovated and changing the name to "Vivian's Opera House," we opened it for legitimate productions with a very capable company; among the number being Joseph Proctor, and daughter Anna, who has been almost continuously of late years the leading support of Modjeska; Chas. Edmunds and wife, Pacific Coast favorites, and later connected with Manager Maguire's dramatic forces in the Northwest; Mr. E. P. Sullivan and several others of some note, whose names I do not recall at the present moment. There was really no society in Leadville in those days, or at least not sufficient in number to support the legitimate drama. Managers in Leadville at that time were necessitated in catering to a rough element of miners, if they desired to fill their coffers. They would crowd the places of amusement only with the well-known understanding that they be allowed

perfect freedom in the way of smoking and being served with their favorite beverages during the performance, and most of the theatres kept open house until the gray dawn of morning heralded the approaching day, while the poor, exhausted entertainers, the tinselled knights of Terpsichore and Thalia, were only then allowed the opportunity of retiring to the seclusion necessary to woo the much needed and strength restoring ministrations of the dear old God of Sleep, "Morpheus."

We opened the theatre, I remember, with a production of "Oliver Twist," Anna Proctor playing Nancy Sykes; E. P. Sullivan, Bill; Chas. Edmunds, Fagan; Mr. Vivian, the Artful Dodger, and the writer, the title role. Mr. Vivian interspersed his impersonation with songs, among them, his famous "Ten Thousand Miles Away," which was, of course, exceedingly appropriate for the character. Crowds would nightly congregate at the box office, and upon being informed that we did not serve liquors or cigars, with disappointed look, would turn their steps in the direction of the places where they could be entertained more to their fancy. Therefore, we were forced to close for lack of support. Mr. Vivian was idle some little time but finally

accepted an engagement at the Comique, subsequently playing at Woods' Theatre until, having contracted a severe cold, which seriously affected his voice, he was subjected to the necessity of cancelling his engagement, which was his last appearance in public. While playing there he was advertised, as usual, by the managers as "The only Vivian." Now, it happened that there was another gentleman in the mining camp by the name of Vivian. One of the Leadville papers stated one morning that they saw this other Vivian standing in front of the posters by the theatre with a somewhat dejected expression, as he was heard to remark: "Well, if that is the only Vivian, who the devil am I?" and then he sorrowfully turned his steps toward Evergreen Cemetery. We afterwards met the gentleman and he and Mr. Vivian became great friends. We were given a dinner party at his house, which was a very pleasant affair. Before the festivities, in which Mr. Vivian was the feature, came to a close, our host declared that the posters were strictly correct, that there was only one Vivian and that was Charles Vivian.

Mr. Vivian often talked to me of his brother George, always alluding to him in the most affectionate terms and looking forward with

pleasure to the time when he should take me to England to meet him. About a month previous to his fatal illness we attended the Taber Opera House one Sunday evening to listen to a sermon upon the future life by Rev. Mr. Mackay, of the Episcopal Church, who subsequently officiated at his funeral. After returning home we conversed until very late, Mr. Vivian being in a more serious frame of mind than I had ever known him. He suddenly startled me by saying: "My dear, I shall never leave Leadville alive." I could not endure that he should even speak of death, although never thinking for an instant that such an event would take place, and that his prophetic words would be fulfilled. He was ever so full of life and spirit, which made it more difficult to imagine him as a victim of the dread reaper. I merely said to him: "Such a thing cannot be; let us talk of something else." He spoke to me again that night of his brother George, and said: "I want you to see him, sometime, if possible, and tell him all about the last years of my life. I know you will like him for he possesses all the endearing qualities that were my father's."

He talked much of his father, of whom he had been devotedly fond and whose memory he ever

held in sacred reverence, almost akin to worship. He never tired in describing to me the long walks by the sea he used to take in boyhood days by his father's side, near Exeter, in fair Devonshire, always alluding to him in the most affectionate terms, with fond remembrance of those delightful hours spent in pleasant and instructive conversation as they walked the sea-girt shores of old England. There was not a rock or a cliff that he did not know for miles around. We often met his countrymen in the Canadas, and other parts, who considered it astonishing that he was so familiar with almost every foot of English earth. He often related anecdotes in the provincial dialect that were very amusing. He was thoroughly versed in English history as well as all European, and kept well in touch with all the leading topics of the day.

Chapter VII.

Contrary to his usual robust health, from the first of our sojourn in Leadville he had suffered much with a cold, that threatening prelude to the dread disease pneumonia, which in his case, terminated so fatally. One evening, a week before his death, he was entertaining a party of Eastern friends at a clubhouse called Chapin and Gores, which was directly opposite the theatre where he had been previously engaged, so he told me not to look for him until rather late, and I felt no uneasiness at his non-appearance until long after the clock had struck one, when I became slightly impatient, listening for his footstep and the peculiar low whistle, the intonation so unlike any I have ever heard, by which he always used to give me the signal of his approach. I listened anxiously as the timepiece called the hours two, three, four and five. then I became thoroughly alarmed and at six o'clock a messenger arrived with word for me to come as soon as possible to the clubhouse of Chapin and Gore, as Mr. Vivian had been taken

CHARLES ALGERNON SIDNEY VIVIAN,

At the age of thirty-four as the "Admiral" in the original Chicago production of Gilbert & Sullivan's "Pinafore," McVicker's Theatre, fall of 1879.

seriously ill at 1:30; had sent no word before as they had hoped every moment to be able to bring him home, but instead of improving he grew rapidly worse. I hastened to the place and found him in a terrible fever; with the aid of physicians and friends I managed to lift him into a carriage and started for our apartments. I never beheld such a change in a person in so brief a space of time as had taken place in him. He was not even able to hold up his head, but leaned upon my shoulder, perfectly helpless, the friends lifting him from the carriage to the bed, as he was unable to take a step. We had the best medical aid to be procured there; all of the physicians, as they were all friends, being very attentive. Upon the fourth day he seemed quite comfortable.

As friends came in to chat with him, I arranged his pillows at the back for a change that placed him in almost a sitting position and as I had not left his side for the four days and nights since he was taken down, he insisted that while the friends were with him, I should take advantage of the situation and walk out for a little fresh air, which I did, being gone perhaps twenty minutes. Upon my return he was chatting pleasantly, as I had left him, when I

stepped into another room to leave orders with the landlady about preparing some oysters which I had procured while out, as he had expressed a desire for them. I was suddenly called to his side by the friends and found him in a terrible convulsion. I was in despair, for his appearance was such that I thought death was but a question of a few moments. One of the friends rushed for the doctors while the landlady prepared mustards as rapidly as possible, one of which I held at the base of the brain as she had suggested. After a few moments the muscles began to relax and he came out of that dreadful spasm; but his fever rose so rapidly that it was useless to endeavor the counting of his pulse.

I had felt sure of his recovery until that terrible convulsion. From that time on I feared that he was a doomed man, but still I hoped and kept on hoping almost to the bitter end. After that he was irrational much of the time, but seemed to know me, and was always contented while I held his hands and administered his medicine. At twelve o'clock upon the night of his death, he drew me down to him, kissing me many times and whispering endearing words, with a look that fully assured me that he was aware that the end was near, and thus he sank

into a comatose condition which continued until the last sigh of that breath which had proclaimed the mortal was extinguished forever, at ten minutes before four o'clock upon that wild March morning of the 20th inst., 1880.

The funeral services were held at the Taber Opera House, and the largest ever known in Leadville. All the secret societies, the entire dramatic profession, while the population turned out *en masse*, thousands being unable to gain entrance to the building, while every available equipage had been engaged to follow the procession to the cemetery. All the bands of the town with muffled drums played sad funeral dirges. After the services were over at the grave, while sadly marching homeward, they struck up Mr. Vivian's famous "Ten Thousand Miles Away," and played many other airs from his *repertoire* of songs.

The Leadville *Chronicle*, speaking of him, said:

> And after all came Life, and lastly, Death,
> Death with most grim and grisly visage seen.
> Yet he is nothing but parting of the breath,
> Nor aught to see, but like a shake, to ween,
> Unbodied, unsouled, unheard, unseen.

Vivian, the generous, Vivian, the talented, *Vivian*, the *only* Vivian. How true that term now seems.

Charles Vivian is no more. The last sigh of that breath which gave life to many a merry jest, many a kind word and pleasant song, departed from the body at ten minutes before four o'clock, this morning. He was a man of many friends, whom his kindly nature and genial manners drew toward him, and many a tear has been today in the eyes of strong men, who will miss his cheery voice and sincerely regret his taking off.

Brilliant, witty, educated, intelligent, the soul of conviviality, his very presence enthused the dullest company from the first moment of his appearance, with a life and spirit unimaginable to those unacquainted with him. He has no successor in either stage or social circles. A void is left in the latter which will remain forever."

I was given a benefit there at the theatre where Mr. Vivian had been playing, which netted something over four hundred dollars, the largest part of it going to settle the funeral expenses and other necessary bills contracted during Mr. Vivian's illness. I selected a metallic casket, and the best that could be procured in Leadville, as it had been my intention to have him removed when able. The cost was

about two hundred dollars, which I paid Nelson and Craig, the undertakers, from the benefit money. I think they are still in Leadville. I speak of this as it has been erroneously stated that it was $600 and presumably paid for by the Knights of Pythias.

Mr. Vivian's illness was of just seven days' duration and I was never absent from his side by day or night, with the exception of the few moments the day that he had urged me to take the walk. I mention this fact, for I have been frequently asked if I was with Mr. Vivian at the time of his death.

So closed the earthly career of a remarkable personality, stricken down in the full strength of early manhood, ere yet the horizon of life had been sighted from the dim and far-off distance. His unusual temperament, his exceptional and strongly marked individuality debar him somewhat from criticism along the usual conventional lines. Lovable, affectionate, but impetuous in the extreme. He took no time to count the cost, therefore his actions were not tempered by cool calculation and prudence. Frigid caution, with calm and measured step, had no place in the formula of this rare spirit. Spontaneity, warmth of feeling and confidence in those

about him, were dominant characteristics of his nature. He was quick to anger, but as quick to forgive. Whether his life was spent profitably or not is perhaps an open question, as much depends upon the point of view. In answering in the affirmative, I perhaps acknowledge a paradox. If looking from a financial standpoint, certainly one must answer in the negative, but money getting, prompted by personal greed, seems a decidedly selfish and sordid occupation. If the purpose is to be the better able to benefit humanity it becomes praiseworthy.

The greater part of Charles Vivian's life was spent in his endeavors to make others happy, and those who remember him best can testify as to how well he succeeded in enabling them for a time, at least, to forget the trials and cares of every-day life, while listening to this prince of entertainers. That he sacrificed himself professionally and financially upon the altar of the club and social circle, there is not the shadow of a doubt. In being able to give others pleasure, he best pleased himself; with all his brilliancy and talent, in money matters he was like a child and as fully irresponsible. He instinctively obeyed the scriptural injunction, "Take no

thought for the morrow," to the letter. "*Dum vivimus vivamus*" was stamped upon his coat of arms and to its sentiment he was ever loyal. The more practical advice, "Put money in thy purse," which, when followed, less often leads to humiliation and disaster, he heeded not.

He was always a leader in club circles, never a follower, yet not from any *amour propre*, but owing to his wonderful gift of entertaining; his recognized superiority in such matters; his strong personal magnetism, and the preference of his fellows.

In closing will state that whatever I have written of him is at least sincere. I have spoken of him as I knew him. As is generally known, Mr. Vivian's remains were removed from Leadville by the Elks and reinterred in the "Elks' Rest," at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Boston, April 28, 1899.

"Requiescat in Pace."

TO

Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian

Ah! Many a soul by grief and care,
Thrown out of tune, in discord with the Infinite,
Hath back to glorious harmony been led,
While listening to thy mirth, the magic of thy wit.

I wonder if when Momus smiled,
Old Momus ever joyous, ever free from care,
He gazed with rapture on thy face so long,
Unwittingly, he left his laughing impress there.

Oh! All too brief in transitu,
Between the two eternities, thy sparkling spirit's pause
On this sad earth. A King might envy thee thy beings mission,
For mirth and laughter thou didst ever cause.

Imogen Holbrook Vivian.

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